



*City of Taunton*

## *Senior Citizen Information*

### *COVID 19/Coronavirus*

#### **Council on Aging/Seniors:**

- All Senior Center programs are cancelled until further notice
- Tax services will be canceled beginning March 17 until further notice
- Outreach staff will be calling all elders on their outreach lists to check on them.
- All COA program participants will receive weekly calls to check in
- Senior Tax Work off will be delayed until further notice

**Bristol Elder Services, Inc.** – Home Delivered Meals will continue. For those who have signed up for site meals, a bag lunch will be provided at this time. BES is currently examining options to traditional meals service and are determining those meals participants who are at-risk. If you have any questions regarding Bristol Elder Services, please call: (508-675-2101)

Please contact the Department of Human Services/Taunton Council on Aging with any additional questions: **508-821-1420/1425.**

**Nursing Homes:** We know nursing homes have been hit especially hard by the coronavirus. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families, residents, and employees. To help families get information about their loved ones' care at nursing homes, a nursing home resource line has also been started. This is a dedicated telephone line that will connect family members of nursing homes and rest home residents with information and resources. The hotline is staffed seven days a week from 9am to 5pm, and the number is 617-660-5399.

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## TRANSPORTATION

### GATRA Updates- Effective as of May 6, 2020 until further notice

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Note: all changes are in compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Department of Public Health guidelines on social distancing in an effort to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus. BOARDING – GATRA is encouraging rear door boarding on buses. Passengers with disabilities and the elderly will still be allowed to use front door entrances. Following Federal, State and CDC recommendations, GATRA vehicles and facilities are being continually cleaned and disinfected. Hand sanitizing stations have been mounted on walls in GATRA facilities and mounted on each vehicle, in addition, helpful health information for GATRA riders is posted on their vehicles and in our facilities.

**To protect our Operators:** We have restricted passengers from sitting anywhere near our operators. The immediate seats that are close to our Operators have been roped off. Operators do not make change and there is no contact between Operators and passengers in fare collection.

We have instituted a Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) plan for all drivers including gloves and sanitizing wipes/lotions. We are waiting for a shipment of N95 masks that we will be handing out once they arrive. The fare system currently used by the GATRA minimizes driver-passenger contact. We have also instituted the “Collecting Fares without Enforcement” language that the MBTA and most of the RTA’s have chosen to do as well.

The GATRA Administrative office is open to the public. Although GATRA is trying to keep as much service as possible, this is subject to change according to Federal and State guidelines.

At the end of every day the buses are cleaned and disinfected.

Please call for any questions or concerns and visit their website [gatra.org](http://gatra.org) for daily updates on all their services. If they call they can leave a message at (508-823-8828).

GATRA is urging our passengers to follow the recommendations of CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public health with the following procedures to combat the spreading of any virus.

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Stay home if you’re sick
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean areas that are frequently touched with sanitizing spray or wipes

For any additional information you go on the GATRA website at [www.gatra.org](http://www.gatra.org).

#### Taunton:

<i>Type of Service:</i>	<i>Service for:</i>	<i>Operated by:</i>	<i>Phone:</i>
Fixed Route	Public	PTM	800-483-2500
Dial-a-Ride	Senior/Disabled	PTM	508-823-8828
Med Wheels	Senior/Disabled	GATRA	508-823-8828 X 263

GATRA has experienced a decline in our average weekly ridership. At this point, we have approximately 3600 riders on our fixed route service, down from 7700, Dial A Ride service has approximately 543 riders, down from 2124 and all of the Council on Aging transportation services are closed for the most part.

Due to the safety of our Operators and Passengers, effective Monday April 13, 2020 GATRA will be operating a Modified weekday fixed route service. We will have normal morning hours but our afternoons will end at 5pm. The ADA and Para-Transit service will be operating on this schedule.

GATRA is committed to providing transportation service to our riders in getting to work, grocery/pharmacy shopping, and life supporting medical services. As this situation develops, we all will need to work together to get through this very challenging experience with the Covid-19 virus. This current plan is designed to get us through the next few weeks however, we are working on a daily basis with the federal, state and local resources to continue to safely provide transit services for those who need it.